

The videogames ; fans of a film star



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The Concept of ' Mass' and ' Mass Behaviour': " A mass is not the same as crowd. A group of spectators watching a cricket match constitute a ' crowd'.

But a large number of people who watch the same game at home on television constitute a " Mass". Hault defines mass as a " relatively large number of persons, spatially dispersed and anonymous, reacting to one or more of the same stimuli but acting individually without regard to one another". Mass behaviour is the unorganised, unstructured, uncoordinated, individually chosen behaviour of masses. If the ' crowd behaviour' is very brief and confined to an event at a particular spot and is acted out by people as a group ;'mass behaviour' is more enduring and arises from the sum total of many individual actions. If in crowds people are gathered in a place to provoke immediate interaction; in masses, people are scattered over a vast area and do not have any direct and continuous contact with one another. " When many people, acting individually rather than as a group, move in the same direction, this is mass behaviour". Examples: Refugees in search of security; the popularity of videogames ; fans of a film star celebrating the release of a new movie of their favourite actor in their own diverse ways, hundreds of people rushing to a new model vehicle because of an impressive newspaper and television advertisement in its favour, etc.

Some Basic Forms of Mass Behaviour (Rumours, Panics, Mass Hysteria, Fashions and Fads) 5. Rumours: One aspect of public opinion which has become a focus of attention is the transmission of rumours. " A rumour is a rapidly spreading report unsubstantiated by fact"—Horton and Hunt. 1. " A rumour is information that is transmitted informally from anonymous sources"—Ian Robertson. 2. Rumour refers to " information which travels

from person to person by word of mouth”— Wallace and Wallace The spreading of a rumour itself is a form of collective behaviour. Hence rumours are an important element in virtually all forms of collective behaviour.

A rumour may be true, false, or a combination of truth and falsehood. Much or casual conversation consists of rumour mongering. From neighbours, narration of stories to the state of a nation all topics attract interesting and disturbing rumours. Its origin is usually difficult to trace out and verify. Its method of transmission is also a curious one. Most of the times it is transmitted outside the formal communications system of TV, government announcements, radio, newspapers, and the like.

Rumours normally rise in situations where people are deprived of information or where they do not trust the official information they are given. Thus, a rumour can be regarded as a substitute for hard news. People want information, and rumour fills their need if dependable information is lacking. Whenever there is social strain, rumours flourish, further, rumours can ruin reputations, discredit causes and undermine the morale. Hence the manipulation of rumour is a common practice in propaganda. Allport and Postman (1947) after a curious study of rumour have pointed out that a great deal of rumour mongering springs from nothing more than the desire for interesting conversation or the enjoyment of salacious story. It is also observed that people are most likely to believe and spread rumour if it will justify their biases or relieve their emotional tensions. For example, people who dislike capitalists, hate Brahmins and condemn religious leaders — will listen, remember and repeat damaging rumour about these set of people.

The rumour changes continuously as it spreads for people unconsciously distort it. People uncritically accept and believe a rumour if it fits in with their pattern of beliefs, likes and dislikes. People support rumour if it provides an emotionally satisfying explanation of something.

When once they are spread, rumours cannot easily be dispelled by truthful pronouncements. As Horton and Hunt have said “ Rumours are believed and spread because people need and like them”. Shibutani (1966) says “ The process of rumour construction is terminated when the situation in which it arose is no longer problematic”. Rumours, for example, flourish where people feel that they cannot trust government officials to tell them the truth. Rumours that are usually persistent often become legends.

The legends are accepted by many people as. Some legends are there since generations.